



To: Interested Parties  
From: Norman Analytics and Research  
Date: October 3, 2016  
Re: Polling in Virginia

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The debate in Congress and across the country over the issue of trade and the treaty negotiated by Barack Obama called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) seems to always come down to school-yard taunts and character assassination. To date, the debate can be defined as a battle between supporters who charge opponents “are protectionist and want to close the country off from the rest of the world” to opponents charging supporters just want to make a few extra dollars profit by throwing Americans out of work.

The reality is much more nuanced and, for supporters of the massive TPP much more difficult.

Americans for Limited Government commissioned a poll of voters in the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of discovering how the public views the issues at stake in TPP and subsequent agreements and shedding light on the most significant element that is often overlooked by the media and those seeking enactment of the agreements, the role of national sovereignty in the public’s attitudes and positions.

## **Background**

From September 2-11, 2016, Norman Research and Analytics surveyed 1,062 registered voters in Virginia. Live interviewers call landlines and cell phones. The margin of error for the survey is +/-3.5%. Margin of error for subgroups is higher.

## **Findings**

Four key findings reveal themselves in the data:

- A significant majority of the public supports the adoption of a broad “America First” set of policies that seeks to place the interests of the United States ahead of other nations including allies.



- Aggressively, the public demands that laws and regulations are set by American authorities and that the United States is not bound by standards set by foreign nations or international organizations. In fact, support for this position transcends party, ideology, age and education-levels
- There is wide support for reducing American involvement with treaties or agreements that allow other nations to flood the U.S. market with cheap goods
- And finally, there is equal support for withdrawal from agreements that force the United States to follow labor and product regulations set by other nations.

As is immediately evident, these four data sets fall into two categories; general attitudes toward policy and specific attitudes on trade agreements. The following is a discussion on each of these two categories.

### **Broad America First Policies**

In the Virginia survey, the public has widely embraced the America-First policy. As the chart below shows, by margins of more than 20%, every age group supports an American First policy with the exception of the 18 to 24 year-old group. And, of course, they are the least likely to vote and a relatively small segment of the population



**Do you support or oppose? Adopting a broad “America First” policy that means the primary objective of any policy is to further U.S. interests, even if they are not in line with the interests of foreign nations and allies.**

|                      | Total      | 18-24      | 25-34      | 35-44      | 45-54      | 55-64      | 65+        |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Oppose (NET)</b>  | <b>33%</b> | <b>44%</b> | <b>32%</b> | <b>38%</b> | <b>28%</b> | <b>32%</b> | <b>29%</b> |
| Strongly Oppose      | 15%        | 19%        | 13%        | 14%        | 14%        | 15%        | 17%        |
| Somewhat Oppose      | 18%        | 25%        | 19%        | 24%        | 14%        | 17%        | 12%        |
| <b>Support (NET)</b> | <b>56%</b> | <b>47%</b> | <b>53%</b> | <b>56%</b> | <b>63%</b> | <b>58%</b> | <b>53%</b> |
| Somewhat Support     | 32%        | 37%        | 39%        | 36%        | 34%        | 30%        | 23%        |
| Strongly Support     | 24%        | 10%        | 14%        | 20%        | 29%        | 28%        | 31%        |
| Do not know/Refused  | 12%        | 10%        | 15%        | 6%         | 9%         | 10%        | 18%        |

Support the America First policy crosses all age, race and educational levels with males being the most supportive.

|                      | Total      | White      | Black      | Male       | Female     | HS or Less | Some College | College Graduate |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------------|
| <b>Oppose (NET)</b>  | <b>33%</b> | <b>32%</b> | <b>35%</b> | <b>27%</b> | <b>38%</b> | <b>23%</b> | <b>25%</b>   | <b>39%</b>       |
| Strongly Oppose      | 15%        | 17%        | 13%        | 10%        | 20%        | 9%         | 11%          | 19%              |
| Somewhat Oppose      | 18%        | 15%        | 22%        | 17%        | 18%        | 14%        | 13%          | 20%              |
| <b>Support (NET)</b> | <b>56%</b> | <b>56%</b> | <b>53%</b> | <b>66%</b> | <b>46%</b> | <b>58%</b> | <b>65%</b>   | <b>52%</b>       |
| Somewhat Support     | 32%        | 30%        | 33%        | 36%        | 28%        | 32%        | 34%          | 31%              |
| Strongly Support     | 24%        | 26%        | 20%        | 30%        | 18%        | 25%        | 31%          | 21%              |
| Do not know/Refused  | 12%        | 12%        | 11%        | 7%         | 15%        | 19%        | 11%          | 9%               |



But these numbers are understated. When the concept of America First is defined as having the ability and power to set our own laws and regulations and not being bound by the standards of foreign nations or international organizations, support jumps significantly.

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? America must have the ability to set its own laws and regulations and not be bound to standards set by foreign nations and international organizations.**

|                       | Total      | 18-24      | 25-34      | 35-44      | 45-54      | 55-64      | 65+        |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Disagree (NET)</b> | <b>26%</b> | <b>31%</b> | <b>36%</b> | <b>34%</b> | <b>23%</b> | <b>22%</b> | <b>17%</b> |
| Strongly Disagree     | 11%        | 5%         | 19%        | 12%        | 9%         | 8%         | 10%        |
| Somewhat Disagree     | 15%        | 26%        | 18%        | 21%        | 15%        | 14%        | 7%         |
| <b>Agree (NET)</b>    | <b>69%</b> | <b>68%</b> | <b>58%</b> | <b>63%</b> | <b>73%</b> | <b>74%</b> | <b>76%</b> |
| Somewhat Agree        | 26%        | 48%        | 37%        | 19%        | 22%        | 24%        | 19%        |
| Strongly Agree        | 44%        | 20%        | 21%        | 44%        | 51%        | 50%        | 57%        |
| Do not know/Refused   | 5%         | 1%         | 6%         | 4%         | 4%         | 4%         | 7%         |



Again, support extends across the demographic universe; with males being more supportive and African-Americans the least supportive. Of particular note is the ideological split on this issue among White, working class citizens. Even those who consider themselves “liberal” support the national sovereignty position.

|                       | <b>Total</b> | <b>Conservative</b> | <b>Moderate</b> | <b>Liberal</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>Disagree (NET)</b> | <b>26%</b>   | <b>12%</b>          | <b>32%</b>      | <b>44%</b>     |
| Strongly Disagree     | 11%          | 5%                  | 13%             | 19%            |
| Somewhat Disagree     | 15%          | 7%                  | 19%             | 25%            |
| <b>Agree (NET)</b>    | <b>69%</b>   | <b>86%</b>          | <b>65%</b>      | <b>50%</b>     |
| Somewhat Agree        | 26%          | 20%                 | 29%             | 30%            |
| Strongly Agree        | 44%          | 66%                 | 36%             | 21%            |
| Do not know/Refused   | 5%           | 2%                  | 3%              | 6%             |

From this, it becomes clear than any policy that is in conflict with one that has the United States setting their own rules and regulations will be met with strong opposition from a broad spectrum of the public. Likewise, those policies that cede national authority to international bodies will find that the public will be hostile. With those who have strong feelings on this question being 4 to 1 in favor of national sovereignty, existing trade and international arrangements will find a strong opposition base.

**Attitudes on Trade Agreements**

Most people do not oppose the concept of trade with other nations. They do, however, oppose one-sided arrangements that allow foreign nations a privileged or special access that results in harm to the worker or national interest.



The perception that current trade agreements permit foreign nations to flood the United States with goods either produced with subsidies or substandard wages draws strong opposition. In this particular instance, the 18 to 24 year-old voters join older voters in strong opposition. This may result from taking the concept of American sovereignty from the abstract to the specific; but regardless, this is a stark increase in opposition for that age group.

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? We can bring jobs back to America by reducing our nation’s participation in trade deals that make it easy for other countries to flood our markets with cheap goods.**

|                       | Total      | 18-24      | 25-34      | 35-44      | 45-54      | 55-64      | 65+        |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Disagree (NET)</b> | <b>35%</b> | <b>33%</b> | <b>34%</b> | <b>41%</b> | <b>28%</b> | <b>34%</b> | <b>36%</b> |
| Strongly Disagree     | 18%        | 12%        | 11%        | 24%        | 15%        | 17%        | 20%        |
| Somewhat Disagree     | 18%        | 21%        | 23%        | 17%        | 13%        | 17%        | 16%        |
| <b>Agree (NET)</b>    | <b>59%</b> | <b>61%</b> | <b>56%</b> | <b>54%</b> | <b>67%</b> | <b>60%</b> | <b>58%</b> |
| Somewhat Agree        | 28%        | 40%        | 32%        | 30%        | 28%        | 23%        | 25%        |
| Strongly Agree        | 31%        | 21%        | 25%        | 24%        | 40%        | 36%        | 33%        |
| Do not know/Refused   | 6%         | 7%         | 10%        | 5%         | 5%         | 6%         | 6%         |



Support for this position crosses all demographic lines.

|                       | Total      | White      | Black      | Male       | Female     | HS or Less | Some College | College Graduate |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------------|
| <b>Disagree (NET)</b> | <b>35%</b> | <b>35%</b> | <b>38%</b> | <b>36%</b> | <b>34%</b> | <b>31%</b> | <b>31%</b>   | <b>38%</b>       |
| Strongly Disagree     | 18%        | 16%        | 23%        | 17%        | 18%        | 18%        | 17%          | 17%              |
| Somewhat Disagree     | 18%        | 18%        | 15%        | 19%        | 16%        | 13%        | 14%          | 20%              |
| <b>Agree (NET)</b>    | <b>59%</b> | <b>59%</b> | <b>55%</b> | <b>59%</b> | <b>59%</b> | <b>64%</b> | <b>63%</b>   | <b>56%</b>       |
| Somewhat Agree        | 28%        | 27%        | 28%        | 29%        | 27%        | 24%        | 25%          | 30%              |
| Strongly Agree        | 31%        | 32%        | 28%        | 30%        | 31%        | 40%        | 38%          | 25%              |
| Do not know/Refused   | 6%         | 7%         | 7%         | 5%         | 8%         | 5%         | 6%           | 7%               |

And, as predicted by the support for American sovereignty in the abstract policy questions, voters overwhelmingly believe that the loss of jobs in the United States can be stopped and reversed is we, as a nation, set our own standards and do not submit to so-called “international standards”

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? We can bring jobs back to America by reducing our nation’s participation in trade deals that force us to follow labor and product regulations set by other nations.**

|                       | Total      | 18-24      | 25-34      | 35-44      | 45-54      | 55-64      | 65+        |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Disagree (NET)</b> | <b>36%</b> | <b>31%</b> | <b>40%</b> | <b>47%</b> | <b>32%</b> | <b>32%</b> | <b>34%</b> |
| Strongly Disagree     | 16%        | 16%        | 15%        | 20%        | 11%        | 17%        | 16%        |
| Somewhat Disagree     | 20%        | 15%        | 25%        | 28%        | 21%        | 16%        | 18%        |
| <b>Agree (NET)</b>    | <b>56%</b> | <b>63%</b> | <b>52%</b> | <b>47%</b> | <b>63%</b> | <b>59%</b> | <b>56%</b> |
| Somewhat Agree        | 30%        | 46%        | 36%        | 23%        | 27%        | 30%        | 26%        |
| Strongly Agree        | 26%        | 16%        | 17%        | 24%        | 36%        | 28%        | 30%        |
| Do not know/Refused   | 8%         | 7%         | 8%         | 6%         | 6%         | 9%         | 10%        |



Again, support for this position crosses all demographic lines

|                       | Total      | White      | Black      | Male       | Female     | HS or Less | Some College | College Graduate |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------------|
| <b>Disagree (NET)</b> | <b>36%</b> | <b>35%</b> | <b>40%</b> | <b>38%</b> | <b>35%</b> | <b>23%</b> | <b>31%</b>   | <b>42%</b>       |
| Strongly Disagree     | 16%        | 14%        | 22%        | 16%        | 16%        | 9%         | 16%          | 18%              |
| Somewhat Disagree     | 20%        | 21%        | 18%        | 21%        | 20%        | 15%        | 16%          | 24%              |
| <b>Agree (NET)</b>    | <b>56%</b> | <b>57%</b> | <b>52%</b> | <b>56%</b> | <b>56%</b> | <b>69%</b> | <b>63%</b>   | <b>49%</b>       |
| Somewhat Agree        | 30%        | 30%        | 24%        | 29%        | 30%        | 27%        | 31%          | 30%              |
| Strongly Agree        | 26%        | 27%        | 28%        | 27%        | 26%        | 43%        | 32%          | 19%              |
| Do not know/Refused   | 8%         | 8%         | 8%         | 7%         | 9%         | 8%         | 6%           | 8%               |

### **Conclusion**

Voters in Virginia are adamant in their support for the principles of American Sovereignty and a strong national control over trade policy. There is no discernable opposition to the concept of trade itself. There is, however, an insistence that trade agreements reflect the interests of the United States.

It is clear that any legislation or proposal that cedes US authority to international bodies and allows those foreign bodies to exert authority over American citizens and commerce will be met with strong opposition. As the debate over various trade arrangements goes forward, these trends and attitudes will be tested in other states. But using Virginia as a guide, moving to enact the Trans-Pacific Partnership would be a serious political mistake for those advocating it.